DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 328 931 CS 507 396

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TITLE Activities and Adaptations for At-Risk Students: Student and Teacher Perceptions.
PUB DATE Dec 90
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Reading Forum (11th, Sarasota, FL, December 12-15, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Aptitude; *High Risk Students; High Schools; High School Students; Potential Dropouts; *Program Development; Remedial Programs; School Surveys; Student Improvement; *Student Needs; Teacher Response
IDENTIFIERS Georgia; Kansas; Mississippi; Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

Using the findings of an earlier study regarding differences between student and teacher perceptions of what circumstances might contribute to a student's being "at risk," a follow-up study investigated what teachers and other school personnel can do to help at-risk students. Based on responses to two open-ended questions from the earlier study, a 40-item questionnaire was developed to determine what schools could to to assist at-risk students in four areas: (1) curriculum modification; (2) assessment modification; (3) program development; and (4) demonstration of concern. Additionally, four open-ended questions were developed to require that respondents also generate written answers. The questionnaire was administered to three distinct groups of subjects from four states (Georgia, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Mississippi) including 60 teachers, 89 students not at risk, and 97 students at risk. Results revealed a large difference between ratings of value of suggested adaptations for at-risk students and ratings of use of the same adaptations. Results also revealed significant differences between the two groups of students and the teachers with regard to job-related suggestions as well as the need for support groups or counseling. Overall, the responses suggest that the different groups see quite different pieces of the problem. Findings suggest that attempts must be made to learn from students and to involve them in the evaluation and selection of activities. (Eight tables of data are included; two appendixes containing the questionnaire and a definition of at-risk students are attached.) (KEH)

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Activities and Adaptations for At-Risk Students: Student and Teacher Perceptions

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Paper Presented at 11th American Reading Forum
December 12-15, 1990

CS507396

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Activities and Adaptations for At-Risk Students:
Student and Teacher Perceptions

Much has been written in the past few years about "at-risk" students, those children likely to drop out of school prior to graduating from twelfth grade. Entire editions of such professional publications as *Educational Leadership* (February 1989) and the *Journal of Reading* (April 1990) have focused on suggestions and programs for at-risk students. Such concern for these students has resulted in many programs being mandated and developed at state and local levels. However, viewpoints differ about the make-up and focus of recommendations and programs for the at-risk student. Emphases have included focus on academic disability, on job-training programs, on making schools more relevant for the individual student, and on proposals for restructuring the schools (Slavin & Madden, 1989; Newmann, 1989; Hamby, 1989; Madden, Slavin, Karweit & Livermon, 1989).

All of these differing conceptions of what at-risk programs should involve share a concern for students' learning. What they do not share is a common understanding of the problem. Students who are at risk are not just those having weak academic skills (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; National Association of School Social Workers, 1985; Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States, 1985). While programs and suggestions that focus on academic disabilities may be valuable and necessary for many at-risk students, attempting to solve at-risk students' problems solely with remedial programs is likely to be unsuccessful. In fact, the recommendations of Greene and Uroff (1989), Newmann (1989), and Hamby (1989) suggest the problem may be compounded by traditional remedial programs. Telfer, Jennings, McNinch, & Mottley (1990) found some evidence from at-risk students themselves supporting such a contention. These remedial programs may not only be ineffective, they may also be counterproductive if they focus on skill deficiencies to solve a problem of self-esteem, disengagement, and alienation.

An element that is being increasingly emphasized in at-risk programs is the involvement of the students. In the past many of the recommendations and programs were imposed on the at-risk student; only rarely were such

students asked for input (Newmann, 1989). Now, more recognition is being made of the importance of these students' input and involvement in program development.

In this study we continued to consult the students. The study is a extension of earlier work (Telfer, et al., 1990) in which we looked at student and teacher perceptions of what it means to be "at risk." In the earlier study, at-risk students were found to differ from other students and from teachers in their perceptions of what circumstances might contribute to a student's being at risk. In addition, both populations of students differed from teachers in their perceptions of what teachers and other school officials could do to help at-risk students.

The current study was designed to look more closely at the differences found in the earlier study. Specifically, we evaluated the suggestions made in that study as to what teachers and other school personnel can do to help at-risk students. A follow-up survey (Appendix A) was then developed to expand the previous study in three areas. First, the follow up survey asked students and teachers to identify which of several specific activities and adaptations of school programs would help at-risk students. Second, the survey examined the extent to which these same activities and adaptations are being used in classrooms. Third, the survey further explored differences in the suggestions offered by at-risk students, not-at-risk students, and teachers.

The responses to the survey were used to seek the answers to three general questions: (a) How do the respondent groups perceive the activities and adaptations for at-risk students? (b) Do the groups react differently to the activities and adaptations measured by the scales? and (c) Do perceptions of at-risk students, not-at-risk students, and teachers differ as to possible avenues of intervention?

Methods

A 40-item questionnaire was developed (Appendix A) based on responses to two open-ended questions (What should teachers do to help "at-risk" students? and What can be done by school officials to help "at-risk" students?) from earlier research (Telfer, et al., 1990) to determine what schools could do to assist at-risk students. Four major themes within the responses were identified: (a) curriculum modification, (b) assessment modification, (c) program development, and (d) demonstration of concern.

These four themes became the the framework of the questionnaire. Each area was represented by approximately 10 questions on the research questionnaire. Subjects were asked to respond to the questionnaire in two ways: (1) a rating of Effectiveness and (2) a perception of Use by teachers. Answers to the two ratings were in the form of Likert scale responses (1-5) as indicated below.

Effectiveness	Use
1-very ineffective	1-never
2-ineffective	2-rarely
3-somewhat effective	3-sometimes
4-effective	4-frequently
5-very effective	5-regularly

In addition to the 40 Likert type responses on the questionnaire, four open-ended questions were developed to seek additional suggestions as to what activities and adaptations for at-risk students could most profitably be used by teachers or school districts. These four items required that the respondents generate written answers.

Three distinct groups of subjects were included in the study: teachers, students not at risk, and students at risk. Each of these subject sets was duplicated in four states: Georgia, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Mississippi. An attempt was made to draw approximately equal numbers for each data set. Only senior high students and teachers were included. At-risk students were identified in Appendix B. In all, the study included 60 teachers, 89 students not at risk, and 97 students at risk.

Data Analysis

The responses to the 40-item questionnaire were scored using the 5-point scales identified previously. An average score was calculated for the total instrument and for each of the subsets of scores, resulting in paired scores of Effectiveness and Use. These average scores were calculated separately for teachers, not-at-risk students, and at-risk students. The Effectiveness and Use scores were then compared using paired t-tests. In addition, scores reflecting the differences between Effectiveness and Use

were calculated. The groups' scores were then compared using analyses of variance (ANOVA).

Responses to the open-ended questions were read, grouped, and analyzed. The responses were randomly assigned identification numbers and then photocopied. Responses were then read by two raters who knew neither the identity nor the group of the individual responding. Initially, the raters read and discussed the same 25 protocols in order to identify categories. Once the categories were established the remaining protocols were rated, although some adjustment of categories was done by collapsing categories after the rating was completed. For the categories that were collapsed, the relevant responses were recategorized. The initial rating resulted in 80% agreement as to the proper categorization of the responses. Disagreements were discussed and resolved.

Percentages of individuals in a group who gave a particular response were then calculated. Comparisons of patterns of student and teacher responses were made using a contingency table and Chi Square statistics.

Results

The study centered around three general questions: (a) How do the respondent groups perceive the activities and adaptations for at-risk students? (b) Do the groups react differently to the activities and adaptations measured by the scales? and (c) Do perceptions of at-risk students, not-at-risk students, and teachers differ as to possible avenues of intervention? The results that follow directly respond to the general questions that were posed.

Question 1-How do the respondent groups perceive the activities and adaptations for at-risk students? Summative means for each of the scales, Effectiveness and Use, and subscales, Curriculum Modification, Assessment Modification, Program Development, and Demonstration of Concern, were developed and are reported in Table 1. Mean item scores for the total and for the subsets are reported in Table 2.

Table 1

Means Scores for Groups on the Total Questionnaire and the Four Subsets

	Teachers	Students Not-At-Risk	Students At- Risk
Effectiveness: Total	148.73	148.63	135.34
Use: Total (40 items)	119.10	100.93	103.62
Effectiveness: Curriculum Modification	35.85	35.96	33.45
Use: Curriculum Modification (10 items)	27.88	25.61	26.24
Effectiveness: Assessment Modification	35.17	35.82	34.75
Use: Assessment Modification (10 items)	31.46	26.93	27.35
Effectiveness: Program Modification	42.62	40.58	36.67
Use: Program Modification (11 items)	32.12	28.20	29.00
Effectiveness: Demonstration Concern	36.10	36.27	31.49
Use: Demonstration Concern (9 items)	30.22	22.27	23.47

On the Effectiveness scale (See Table 2), scores ranged from low perceptions of 3.38 and 3.39 (Somewhat Effective) for at-risk students on Curriculum Modification and Program Development, respectively, to a high perception of 4.04 (Effective) for Demonstration of Concern by students not at risk. Twelve of the possible 15 scores were above 3.5 which would indicate that the three groups did perceive activities and adaptations as positive (Effective). However, no scores approached 4.5 (Very Effective). Though the groups were positive in their views of effectiveness for the suggested activities and adaptations for at-risk students, they were not "very" positive.

Table 2

Means Item Scores for Groups on the Total and Subsets

	Teachers	Students Not At Risk	Students At Risk
Effectiveness: Total	3.74	3.73	3.47
Use: Total	3.01	2.54	2.64
Effectiveness: Curriculum Modification	3.61	3.61	3.38
Use: Curriculum Modification	2.83	2.59	2.65
Effectiveness: Assessment Modification	3.54	3.61	3.53
Use: Assessment Modification	3.17	2.71	2.75

Effectiveness: Program Development	3.89	3.69	3.39
Use: Program Development	2.70	2.37	2.48
Effectiveness: Demonstration Concern	3.93	4.04	3.61
Use: Demonstration Concern	3.38	2.50	2.69

On the Use scale (Table 2), scores ranged from a low of 2.37 (Rarely) expressed by students not at risk on the Program Development items to a high of 3.38 (Sometimes) expressed by teachers on the Demonstration of Concern items. Two of the perceptions were in the"rarely" range; 13 were in the "sometimes" range. No mean perceptions were in the categories of "frequently" or "regularly." It appears that the groups did not perceive that many activities or adaptations were currently or actively in place for at-risk students.

Dependent t-tests were computed between the means of the Effectiveness and the Use scales for each group to investigate possible differences existing between perceptions of appropriateness and delivery. The results are reported in Table 3. In each comparison (total and the four composite subscales), the perceptions of Effectiveness differed significantly from the perceptions of Use. In each comparison, the means for Use are significantly lower than the means of Effectiveness. Clearly, each group is sensitive to differences in Effectiveness and Use. The various intervention or compensatory activities and adaptation designed for helping at-risk students cope with school are perceived as effective; however, these same activities or adaptations are perceived as not currently available to students in need.

Table 3

Summary of Paired t-test Values Comparing the Effectiveness with the Use Scales

	df	Mean Diff	Paired t	Probability
Teachers				
Eff/Use: Total	59	29.63	8.82	< .001
Eff/Use: Curr Modification	59	7.97	9.23	< .001
Eff/Use: Assess Modification	59	3.71	4.22	< .001
Eff/Use: Prog Development	59	10.50	7.34	< .001
Eff/Use: Demo Concern	59	4.88	5.97	< .001

Students Not At Risk				
Eff/Use: Total	88	47.70	14.07	< .001
Eff/Use: Curr Modification	88	10.35	12.42	< .001
Eff/Use: Assess Modification	88	8.89	12.51	< .001
Eff/Use: Prog Development	88	12.38	9.07	< .001
Eff/Use: Demo Concern	88	13.97	12.90	< .001
Students At Risk				
Eff/Use: Total	96	31.72	7.08	< .001
Eff/Use: Curr Modification	96	7.22	7.04	< .001
Eff/Use: Assess Modification	96	7.40	6.72	< .001
Eff/Use: Prog Development	96	7.76	4.93	< .001
Eff/Use: Demo Concern	96	8.03	6.51	< .001

Question 2-Do the groups react differently to the activities and adaptations measured by the scales? The differences in perceptions among the groups may best be explored by computing a derived difference score (Effectiveness minus Use) for the total score and each of the four subscales. Five one-way analyses of variance were computed (Table 4) using group as the independent variable and the difference score as the dependent variable. In four of the five analyses, the F ratio was significant ($p < .05$) indicating overall differences in perceptions of the behaviors for Total, Curriculum Modification, Assessment Modification, and Demonstration of Concern. Differences were not noted in Program Development. It appears that the groups reacted differently to most perceptions of activities and adaptations suggested for at-risk students.

Table 4

ANOVA Summary: Group Comparisons Using the Mean Differences as the Criterion

Variable	F Ratio	Probability	Significant Scheffe
Effectiveness - Use: Total	6.01	< .003	Tchrs vs Not At Risk Not At Risk vs At Risk
Effectiveness - Use: Curriculum Modification	3.25	< . 05	Not At Risk vs At Risk
Effectiveness - Use: Assess Modification	6.24	< .003	Tchrs vs Not At Risk

			Tchrs vs At Risk
Effectiveness - Use: Program Development	2.37	NS	
Effectiveness - Use	15.04	< .001	Tchrs vs Not At Risk Not At Risk vs At Risk

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Question 3-Do perceptions of at-risk students, not-at-risk students, and teachers differ as to possible avenues of intervention? The comparisons of the responses to each of the open-ended questions are shown in Tables 5, 6, 7, & 8. Open-Ended Question 1, What other kinds of help (in addition to that listed in Part 1) should be provided for at-risk students?, is summarized in Table 5. The Chi Square analysis indicated that the responses were significantly different ($x^2 = 53.88$, p. = .0001). Visual inspection of the results shows that teachers differ most from the two groups of students in their mentioning of "Jobs, Job Programs, and Job-Related Classes." All three groups differ considerably on the importance of "Help with Schoolwork," with few teachers mentioning help with schoolwork and more students, particularly those not at risk, mentioning it.

Table 5

Question 1--What Other Kinds of Help Should be Provided
Percentages of Responses by Category

Category	Teachers	Not At-Risk	At-Risk
Provide Support	10	12	15
Help with Schoolwork	02	20	12
Jobs, Job Programs, and Job-Related Classes	19	02	06
Change in Classes and/or Teaching Techniques	13	04	07
Change in Structure of School Day	06	04	10
Listen to Students	06	04	03
Allow More Student Voice/Choice	03	06	01
Work With Families	03	01	04
After School Programs	02	01	03
Provide Rewards	02	02	01
Other	11	13	23

The Chi Square analysis of the responses to Question 2, How can teachers do a better job of showing respect for "at-risk" students?, indicated that there were significant differences ($X^2 = 41.44$, $p = .0001$). Visual inspection of the responses (see Table 6) shows sizable differences in the numbers of teachers and students whose responses fit in the category "Treat Students Appropriately." Teachers and not-at-risk students saw "Communication with Students" as more important than did at-risk students. Other differences were seen in "Understanding Student Problems/Needs" and in "Help Students." Teachers apparently see that empathizing with students is necessary, while students see providing help as being at least as important.

Table 6

Question 2--How Can Teachers Do a Better Job of Showing Respect
Percentages of Responses by Category

Category	Teachers	Not At-Risk	At-Risk
Treat Students Appropriately	17	41	34
Communicate with Students	27	35	18
Understand Student Problems/Needs	25	11	07
Help Students	00	11	13
Modify Teaching	08	05	05
Encourage	03	05	05
Other	11	06	07

The responses to question three are also significantly different ($X^2 = 47.72$, $p = .0002$). Of particular note, teachers mentioned "Job Skills Programs" most often, while students, particularly at-risk students mentioned jobs much less often. "Support Groups" were mentioned more often by not-at-risk students than by the other groups.

Table 7

Question 3--What Type of Special Program Would be Most Helpful
Percentages of Responses by Category

Category	Teachers	Not At-Risk	At-Risk
Individualized Programs	22	18	21
Job Skills Programs	32	15	03
Support Groups and Counseling	10	26	12
Alternative Schools	11	09	05
Day Care	06	02	06

Self Esteem Programs	06	04	03
Extra Curricular Programs	03	04	00
Alcohol and Drug Programs	02	00	03
At Home Programs	00	00	03
Other	10	08	09

The responses to question four are also significantly different (X^2 = 36.96, p = .0053). Of particular note, teachers and not-at-risk students mentioned "General Rules" and "Attendance Policies" more often than did at-risk students. Both groups of students mentioned "Teacher Attitudes" more often than did the teachers.

Table 8

Question 4--What School Policies Tend to Encourage At-Risk Students to Drop Out
Percentages of Responses by Category

Category	Teachers	Not At-Risk	At-Risk
General Rules and Rule Enforcement	35	26	24
Attendance Policies	27	25	13
Discipline Policies	08	06	05
Teacher Attitude	02	07	09
School Structure	08	01	06
Classwork	03	05	06
Irrelevance of Curriculum	11	01	02
Grading	02	09	02
Teacher Failure to Look for Reasons for Problems	03	02	00
Other	10	14	08

Discussion

A large difference exists between ratings of value of suggested adaptations for at-risk students and ratings of use of the same adaptations. Both teachers and students consistently rate adaptations as valuable but equally consistently indicate that the adaptations are used infrequently. The fact that the large difference exists suggests that a way to help at-risk students is to close the gap between value and use. Rather than identifying additional strategies, efforts should be made to see that existing strategies are used more often. In order to narrow this gap, additional understanding is

necessary. In particular, educators need to know more about why the gap exists.

While the groups all exhibited large differences between their ratings of value and their ratings of use, the groups also differed one from another. These differences suggest that an understanding of how to work with at-risk students must involve interactions among the groups involved. If teachers and students see different parts of the issue, the decisions teachers alone make will be less helpful than decisions made with input from both at-risk and not-at-risk students.

The responses to the open-ended questions also showed differences between the two groups of students and the teachers. A most prominent difference is the frequency with which the teachers made job-related suggestions. By contrast, students wrote far fewer job-related suggestions. The differences in the groups' frequencies of job-related responses may indicate differing perceptions of the value of job-related activities or differences in understanding of the problem of "at-riskness" and/or its causes. Certainly the responses on this component coincide with at-risk students' lack of interest in special programs found in an earlier study (Telfer, et al., 1990). Another possible inference is that at-risk students and not-at-risk students have similar goals beyond school. Or the differences on this attribute may be caused simply by the at-risk student's desire not to be treated differently from the not-at-risk student.

Other responses suggest that teachers and students differ in their perceptions of the value of understanding students' problems and treating at-risk students appropriately. It appears that teachers see a need to exert greater effort to understand at-risk students' problems and needs, but, comparatively, the teachers listed appropriate treatment of these students far fewer times. It is noteworthy that not-at-risk students listed a need for appropriate treatment of at-risk students even more frequently than did those at risk. At any rate, both student groups are in considerable agreement that this is an area needing attention. Inspection of Table 6 also leads to another speculation: Is there a relationship between responses for "Help Students" and Treat Students Appropriately?" It is interesting to note that both groups of students listed this as a suggestion; but it was not listed at all by teachers. Do teachers perceive themselves as already providing help? Do students think that teachers are not providing help? Or are students suggesting assistance

beyond the variety offered in the classroom? Whatever the reason, there is a large difference between the student groups and the teachers in the listings for these categories.

The biggest differences between the two groups of students were related to the need for support groups or counseling. Not-at-risk students seemed to believe that support groups would be helpful; at-risk students alluded to this factor far less often on the survey. The difference in perception may be a case of "prescribing for someone else rather than for ourselves." It may be that the not-at-risk students perceive a need for counseling that is not apparent to either the teachers or the at-risk students. It may be that not-at-risk students have greater access to informal support groups through differing study habits; that is, perhaps not-at-risk students do more group study and from this get both support and informal counseling from each other. It may also be that not-at-risk students are more willing to approach adults with their problems, especially school-related ones.

Inspection of Table 7 makes one aspect abundantly clear: At-risk students do not see the high school as providing them with a "Jobs Skills Program." This may also be a part of wanting to be treated the same as the not-at-risk peers. Or, as previously mentioned, it may be that at-risk students have similar after-graduation goals as the not-at-risk students, however realistic or unrealistic these goals may be.

Overall, the responses to the open ended questions suggest that the different groups see quite different pieces of the problem. We believe the different reactions should serve at least as a beginning point for policymakers and educators as they develop and refine programs for at-risk students.

Recommendations

The differences shown in this study between the perceptions of students and the teachers may indicate a lack of knowledge or understanding on the part of students. The apparent differences may also be related to semantics, to different interpretations of the questionnaire items. And it may be that students provided spurious answers either because of an eagerness to please or to frustrate those giving the survey, in which case the results reported herein should not be given much consideration. However, if the survey results do indeed identify differences in perceptions, then it is imperative that those involved with designing and/or implementing programs

and instruction for at-risk students consult with the teachers and the students. Only by including these two groups will designers and implementers understand and address the many different aspects of being at risk. Evaluation of such programs must also include perceptions from these two groups. It is important to note the differences between the two groups of students as well. Although smaller than differences between teachers and students, the differences suggest that looking only at the perceptions of the at-risk students will give an incomplete picture.

The results of this study highlight differences between perceptions of effectiveness and perceptions of use. Because of this big gap--indicated by both teachers and students--it seems clear that effective strategies for helping at-risk students are not being used extensively. Since teachers and both groups of students indicated the effectiveness of the strategies, it would seem that better implementation of those strategies would result in more effectively addressing the difficulties associated with students at risk.

Future research could examine in more detail the reasons for the gaps between perceptions of value and perceptions of use. And differences between teacher and student viewpoints concerning value and use could also be explored. Other answers to be sought include determining what curricula teachers view as being appropriate for at-risk students, whether at-risk students agree as to the appropriateness of these curricula, the nature of the help both student groups report as being desirable, how both groups of students perceive individualized programs, the kinds of support group the not-at-risk students believe to be important for at-risk student, and the sources of differences between teacher and student views of appropriate treatment of at-risk students.

Further attention should also be given to looking at the at-risk programs to see if the practices recommended by students and teachers are being implemented. In addition to the perceptions of teachers and students, observers could identify and record the types of instructional and program adaptations that are being used successfully with at-risk students.

Educational Significance

Our increasing knowledge of student and teacher perceptions of successful activities and adaptations for at-risk students will help us identify promising approaches for working with these students. By looking at student

and teacher perceptions, the emphasis can be kept both on programs and on the individuals involved. While it is important to identify successful strategies and programs, identifying these promising approaches is not sufficient. As differences between student and teacher perceptions highlight, attempts must be made to learn from students and to involve them in the evaluation and selection of activities.

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Appendix A

Part 1

Directions: Each of the following 40 items is a way to help at-risk students to stay in school until graduation.

First, please read and decide what you think about the effectiveness of each of these ways. Then circle the **number** that best fits with your belief for each way of helping at-risk students (**1=very ineffective, 2=ineffective, 3=somewhat effective, 4=effective, 5=very effective**).

Second, please circle the **letter** that indicates how often you think teachers in your school use each of these ways (**A=never, B=rarely, C=sometimes, D=frequently, E=regularly**).

Effectiveness	Use	
1. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide special courses (easier or or more challenging) for at-risk students.
2. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide more job-related courses.
3. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide student tutors.
4. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide adults as tutors.
5. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Make computers available to all students.
6. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide audio tape with written material so students can listen to reading assignments.
7. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Give shorter assignments.
8. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Give more time for assignments.
9. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow students to choose from several assignments.
10. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow more hands-on learning (where students make or do something in class).
11. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow students to take oral tests.
12. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide take-home tests.
13. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Design tests that involve significant non-school problems.
14. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow students to participate in self-assessment.

15. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow student to participate in goal setting.
16. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow student to make up tests they have missed.
17. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Give frequent quizzes rather than a few major tests.
18. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Explain what will be on tests before the tests are given.
19. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Allow students to retake tests using alternate forms of tests.
20. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide tutors to help students learn to take tests.
21. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide drug abuse treatment for those who need it.
22. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide alcohol abuse treatment for those who need it.
23. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide counseling programs for at-risk students.
24. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Organize support groups within the school (that meet regularly to discuss common concerns).
25. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Organize support groups outside the school (with students, parents, and/or teachers).
26. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Encourage involvement of at-risk students' parents in schoolwork and school programs.
27. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide reading and writing improvement programs.
28. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide study improvement programs.
29. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide special support teachers.
30. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide alternative schools for at-risk students.
31. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Provide in-school day care for children of at-risk students.
32. 1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E	Listen to student concerns about what is being studied in class.

Part 2

1. What other kinds of help (in addition to that listed in Part 1) should be provided for at-risk students?

2. How can teachers do a better job of showing respect for at-risk students?

3. What type of special program would be most helpful for at-risk students?

4. What school policies tend to encourage at-risk students to drop out of school?

Appendix B

At-Risk Students

There have been a number of definitions of what it means to be an "at-risk" student. For example, one state defines "high risk" students as those who exhibit the following characteristics: "absenteeism, truancy, frequent tardiness, poor grades, low math and reading scores, failure in one or more grades, limited extracurricular participation, lack of identification with school, failure to see the relevance of education to life experience, boredom with school, disruptive behavior and rebellious attitudes towards authority, verbal and language deficiencies, and inability to tolerate structured activities." Another state defines at-risk students as those "whose aspirations and achievement may be negatively affected by stereotypes linked to race, national origin, language background, gender, income, family status, parental status, and disability."